

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 4, 8, 14, and 18 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 6, 7, 9-11, 16, 17, 19 and 20 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

an external device connection unit configured to connect an external device;

a first driver storage unit configured to store a first driver to control the connected external device in a general-purpose manner;

a determination unit configured to determine whether or not a second driver to control the connected external device in a device-specific manner exists in the external device;

an acquisition unit configured to, if said determination unit determines that the second driver exists, obtain the second driver from the connected external device; and

an image data storage unit configured to store image data, wherein said image data storage unit is a volatile storage unit; and

a controller for controlling a storage operation of said second driver,

wherein said controller assigns a vacant area in said image data storage unit to a new second driver to be stored, and if there is no vacant area in said image data storage unit, upon a reception of an instruction from an operator of said information processing apparatus to delete said second driver already stored in said image data storage unit, said controller deletes said

second driver selected by the operator from the image data storage unit;

a third storage unit configured store information on the existence/absence of the second driver in the connected external device; and

a update unit configured to update the information.

wherein said determination unit determines the existence/absence of the second driver to control the connected external device in the device-specific manner in the connected external device, based on the updated information stored in said third storage unit.

2. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a driver switching unit configured to select one of the first driver and the second driver as a driver to control the external device in accordance with the connected external device.

3. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said first driver storage unit is a nonvolatile storage unit.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a warning unit configured to provide a warning to the operator if said determination unit determines that the second driver does not exist.

6. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein said warning unit provides the warning in a case where the second driver cannot be stored in said ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit due to the available capacity of said second driver storage unit being insufficient.

7. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said warning unit provides the warning in a case where data of said second driver stored in said ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit, as a result of a first acquisition operation during which the second driver is acquired from the connected external device and stored in the ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit, is compared with data of the second driver obtained from the connected external device during a second acquisition operation during which the second driver is acquired again from the connected external device and there is a difference between the data of said stored second driver acquired in the first acquisition operation and data of and the obtained second driver acquired in the second acquisition operation.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a display unit configured to display information on the second driver stored in said ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit.

10. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a deletion unit configured to delete the second driver from said ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit if an instruction to delete the second driver from said ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit is received.

11. (Currently Amended) A control method for an information processing apparatus having an external device connection unit to connect an external device, a first driver storage unit to store a first driver to control the connected external device in a general-purpose manner, and an image data storage unit to store image data, the image data storage unit being a volatile storage unit, comprising:

a determination step of determining whether or not a second driver to control the connected external device in a device-specific manner exists in the external device;

an acquisition step of, if it is determined at said determination step that the second driver exists, obtaining the second driver from the connected external device; and

a storage step of storing the obtained second driver into the image data storage unit,

wherein in said storage step, a vacant area in said image data storage unit is assigned to a new second driver to be stored, and if there is no vacant area in said image data storage unit, upon a reception of an instruction from an operator of said information processing apparatus to

delete said second driver already stored in said image data storage unit, said second driver selected by the operator is deleted from the image data storage unit;

a third storage unit step of storing information on the existence/absence of the second driver in the connected external device; and

an update unit updating step of updating the information,

wherein at said determination step, a determination is made as to the existence/absence of the second driver to control the connected external device in the device-specific manner in the connected external device, based on the updated information stored in the third storage unit.

12. (Previously Presented) The control method according to Claim 11, further comprising a driver switching step of selecting one of the first driver and the second driver as a driver to control the external device in accordance with the connected external device.

13. (Previously Presented) The control method according to Claim 11, wherein the first driver storage unit is a nonvolatile storage unit.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The control method according to Claim 11, further comprising a warning step of providing a warning to the operator of if it is determined at said determination step that the second driver does not exist.

16. (Currently Amended) The control method according to Claim 15, wherein at said warning step, the warning is given in a case where the second driver cannot be stored in the ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit due to the available capacity of the ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit being insufficient.

17. (Currently Amended) The control method according to Claim 15, wherein at said warning step, said warning is provided in a case where data of said second driver stored in said ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit, as a result of a first acquisition operation during which the second driver is acquired from the connected external device and stored in the ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit, is compared with the second driver obtained from the connected external device during a second acquisition operation during which the second driver is acquired again from the connected external device and there is a difference between the data of the stored second driver acquired in the first acquisition operation and data of the obtained second driver obtained in the second acquisition operation.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The control method according to Claim 11, wherein the information processing apparatus further comprises a display unit to display information on the second driver stored in the ~~second driver~~ image data storage unit[[,]].

~~said method further comprising a deletion step of deleting the second driver from the second driver storage unit if an instruction to delete the second driver from the second driver storage unit is received.~~

20. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium storing thereon a control program for causing a computer to execute a control method for an information processing apparatus having an external device connection unit to connect an external device, a first driver storage unit to store a first driver to control the connected external device in a general-purpose manner, and an image data storage unit to store image data, the image data storage unit being a volatile storage unit, said control method comprising:

a determination step of determining whether or not a second driver to control the connected external device in a device-specific manner exists in the external device;

an acquisition step of, if it is determined at said determination step that the second driver exists, obtaining the second driver from the connected external device; and

a storage step of storing the obtained second driver into the image data storage unit,

wherein in said storage step, a vacant area in said image data storage unit is assigned a new second driver to be stored, and if there is no vacant area in said image data storage unit, upon a reception of an instruction from an operator of said information processing apparatus to delete said second driver already stored in said image data storage unit, said second driver selected by the operator is deleted from the image data storage unit;

a third storage unit step of storing information on the existence/absence of the second driver in the connected external device; and

an update unit updating step of updating the information,

wherein at said determination step, a determination is made as to the existence/absence of the second driver to control the connected external device in the device-specific manner in the connected external device, based on the updated information stored in the third storage unit.